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29 September 1950

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND IMMIGRATION
WORKING COMMITTEE AT THE SECRETARIAT LEVEL

First Meeting
Santiago, Chile

Background Paper

1. Immigration has been in the past a major factor in the economic development of Latin America. At the same time, immigration is itself dependent upon economic development; and the migratory inflow is at any given time closely related to the level of economic activity in the countries concerned. The problem before the Committee is that of determining the relation between economic development and immigration both generally and specifically, and of assisting economic development by means of immigration. The problem will vary according to the economic and demographic situation of the different Latin American countries.

2. There is a surplus population in Europe of some four to five million people, predominantly in Italy, Western Germany, the Netherlands, Austria, Greece, Malta and Trieste. This surplus may be reduced to some extent by internal development, by intra-European migration, and by the re-armament programme, but these factors are unlikely to solve the problem of the surplus. It is becoming increasingly recognised that limitations of natural resources make it unlikely that the problem of the surplus can be solved within Europe, and that it is necessary to seek increased

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emigration possibilities. This belief was recently reflected in the OEEC grant of a million dollars to the ILO for technical assistance for European emigration.

3. While this surplus represents a serious economic and social problem for Europe, it also provides a stimulus to the forming of soundly conceived and financed immigration schemes. International action for the promotion of the development of Latin America involving immigration from Europe can serve the dual purpose of assisting Latin America and at the same time aiding European recovery.

4. The planning and execution of migration schemes is a difficult and complex matter. International assistance, apart from the work of IRO in financing the migration of refugees, has hitherto primarily taken the form of the work on conventions and standards undertaken by the ILO and also by the Social Affairs Department of the United Nations, supplemented now by the important and far reaching operational manpower and migration programme of the ILO.

This programme is aimed at activating existing but latent manpower needs including those for migrants as a contribution to economic activity. In addition to the overcoming of difficulties of matching labour supply and demand it has recently become increasingly recognised that a major obstacle to migration is a lack of economic demand for migrants which needs to be overcome by economic development in countries capable and desirous of receiving immigrants. At the ILO Preliminary Migration Conference, at the Third Session of ECLA and at the 11th Session of the Economic and Social Council, it was decided to pursue the economic aspects of migration

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at the international level. The decision was taken, with the agreement of the ILO which has the primary international responsibility in the field of migration, that the economic aspects of migration in relation to Latin America should be pursued by the Economic Commission for Latin America in co-operation with the ILO and the other interested Specialised Agencies, and that the Executive Secretary should set up a Working Committee at the Secretariat level for this purpose.

5. The terms of reference of the ECLA Working Committee and an account of the circumstances leading to its setting up are contained in the Report and Resolution of the Third Session of ECLA (E/1717 and E/1762). The resolution of the 11th Session of ECOSOC dealing with the Third Annual Report of ECLA is in E/1823. Of interest also is the resolution of the same session of ECOSOC dealing with the Report of the Population Commission (E/1783).

6. The ILO, the FAO and the IRO are appointing representatives to the Committee, and close liaison will be maintained with the Social Affairs Department of the United Nations. The International Bank, the WHO and UNESCO are maintaining contact with the Committee's work with a view to participating at stages which they may consider appropriate. The Inter-American Economic and Social Council has been approached for suggestions as to their co-operation with the work of the Committee.

7. The Committee's terms of reference fall into two parts: first the general study of the relation between economic development and immigration; and secondly the making of country surveys and the giving

/of advice

of advice to Governments on specific plans and projects. It is suggested that the two parts be pursued concurrently in order that the general study be as practical as possible, and in order that the findings of the general study may be taken into account in the advice given in particular cases.

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WORKING COMMITTEE AT THE SECRETARIAT LEVEL

First Meeting
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Note on Item (a) of the Terms of Reference

1. Item (a) of its terms of reference require the ECIA Working Committee to study the relation between the economic development of Latin America and immigration. The Economic Survey of Latin America 1949 examines certain theoretical implications of the process of economic development in Latin America and studies long-term trends of development for several countries. The Secretariat is continuing these studies. There is a certain amount of existing material bearing upon immigration and settlement in Latin America, and a good deal of work has been done in the general economic field on the theory of optimum population and the economics of migration. There exists, however, at present no study of the relation between economic development in Latin America and immigration.

2. Studies of the relation between economic development and immigration on a world-wide basis are also lacking, and it should be noted that the ILO at the Preliminary Migration Conference held in May of this year requested a joint study between the United Nations and the ILO on the relation between economic development and immigration. Later, at the 11th Session of the Economic and Social Council, a resolution was passed

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asking the Secretary General to make studies on the inter-relation of the demographic economic and social factors in migration and on adequate practical methods of international financing of European migration. In view of the important place which Latin America occupies in the problem of economic development in relation to migration, the Economic Department and the Social Affairs Department of the United Nations have asked to be kept in close touch with the Committee's work because of its bearing upon the general studies which they have been asked to make. The representative of the Specialised Agencies on the Committee will no doubt wish to maintain similar liaison with their Headquarters which are also concerned in the general studies requested by the Economic and Social Council and the ILO.

3. At its first meeting the Committee might usefully (a) review generally the existing material on this subject (a bibliography and list of documents is contained in ST/ECIA/CI/3/Add. 1 (b) consider the circumstances leading up to the request for this study (see background paper ST/ECIA/CI/2 and (c) start to lay out Chapter headings and a synopsis of the study. A draft will be circulated later for this purpose (ST/ECIA/CI/3/Add.2).

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Note on Item (b) of the Terms of Reference

1. The Executive Secretary has despatched a formal letter (ST/ECLA/C.1/4/Add.1) to all of the Latin American Governments, with copies for information to the other Member Governments. This letter enquires whether the Committee can assist the Government on the matters covered by Item (b) of its terms of reference. This official approach should be followed up by informal contacts.

2. Where Governments are desirous of consulting with the Committee it may be necessary for the Committee to meet in the country concerned. The Committee's procedure will need to be flexible and to vary according to whether the case falls under (1), (2) or (3) of (b) of the terms of reference. In some cases the Government will have plans which exist or are nearing completion; in other cases the Committee's advice may be required on the seeking of suitable projects. It may be desirable to ask Governments which request assistance under (b) (2) and (3) to supply the Committee with particulars of:

(a) current economic projects, capable of absorbing immigrants, which cannot be realised by reason of difficulties which are beyond the resources of the countries themselves to overcome;

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(b) possible fields for additional projects, for the examination of which outside help would be necessary;

(c) past projects which were sound but which failed to materialize owing to lack of necessary technical or financial resources.

3. It is obvious that in addition to the Committee's enquiries, which may of necessity be only of a general character and related to "feasability", it may be desirable for more detailed expert enquiries to be made by means of the technical assistance available at the Headquarters of the United Nations and the Specialised Agencies. Where technical assistance is required it will be necessary to follow the normal procedure under which the application is made by the Government concerned. It will, however, be desirable, where the Government is agreeable, for the Committee to continue to interest itself in the plan or project.

4. The precise procedure would depend upon the nature of the plan or project and the wishes of the Government concerned. But one of the most important potentialities of the Committee might well be the technical assistance which it would render, on request after the stage of detailed expert inquiry, in the working out and operation of the project. The Committee should endeavour to maintain its interest in the plan or project from beginning to end, calling upon further resources through the medium of the technical assistance funds at the various stages of the development and operation of the project.

5. A model type of procedure, where it could be adopted, might be as follows. A certain country has, for example, an under-developed area which might be developed both agriculturally and also in respect of light industries

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given the requisite capital resources, skilled manpower and other means of production. The country requests the Executive Secretary for the Committee's advice and the Committee proceeds to the country's capital. The Committee makes its own examination to decide whether the scheme appears to be feasible and likely to obtain the requisite outside assistance. Where the Committee can only give its view after more detailed expert enquiry and it has exhausted the local possibilities of obtaining such expert advice, it will suggest that the Government apply for a visit by technical experts under the Technical Assistance Scheme. Simultaneously with the Government making that request, the Committee would seek through the appropriate channels the support of United Nations Headquarters and the Headquarters of the various specialized agencies for the granting of the requisite technical assistance. The technical assistance experts would, before making their detailed enquiries, meet with the Government and with the Committee and discuss the scheme generally. The Committee would keep in contact with the detailed enquiries and meet on their completion with the various experts concerned. The report of the experts would be submitted to the Government through the approved technical assistance channels, but both the Committee and the experts would have had the advantage of informal consultations. Assuming that the experts reported favourably to the Government, the next steps would be first the obtaining of the necessary means for carrying out the project, such as finance, equipment, suitable labour and immigrants, and later the successful administration of the project after its commencement. These will be a matter on which the Committee should be prepared to give assistance in accordance with the terms of reference to Governments upon request.

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6. The value of the Committee's work will depend upon the extent to which it becomes a useful instrument to Governments and known as such. Migration and settlement projects are full of difficulties. To the range of problems involved in ordinary development is added the complexity of the movement settlement and assimilation of individual people. The Committee should initially seek to aid Governments to develop plans and projects which are connected with the current growth and current possibilities of the economies of interested countries.

7. It is not possible to envisage what requests will be received from particular Governments, but some material is being collected regarding the most fruitful possible fields for the Committee's work and will be avialable to the Committee when it meets.

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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND IMMIGRATION

WORKING COMMITTEE AT THE SECRETARIAT LEVEL

Letter sent on 5th October, 1950, to all Latin American States Members of the Economic Commission for Latin America and for information to other States Members of the Commission

I have the honour to refer to the subject of economic development and immigration which was considered at the Third Session of the Economic Commission for Latin America held in June at Montevideo. At that Session many delegates stressed the role which immigration might play in the economic development of Latin American countries and it was decided to set up a Working Committee at the Secretariat level to study the relation between economic development of Latin America and immigration; to provide the Latin American countries, at their request, with surveys which would ascertain their economic capacity to receive immigration; and to advise and assist these countries regarding the manner in which economic development may be promoted by immigration, and on the possibility of adopting specific plans and projects for economic development involving immigration for which financial and technical assistance may be needed from international organizations.

This proposal was adopted unanimously, and I enclose a copy of the Resolution dealing with the matter. This decision was later approved by the Economic and Social Council.

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I have to inform you that the Working Committee on Economic Development and Immigration will shortly be holding its first meeting in Santiago and that the International Labour Office, the Food and Agricultural Organization and the International Refugee Organization have appointed representatives. The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the World Health Organization and the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization are appointing persons to maintain liaison with the work of the Committee in order that they may participate at the appropriate stage.

I would like to draw your attention to article (b) of the terms of reference of the Committee and to enquire whether the Working Committee can be of assistance to your Government.

(signed) Eugenio Castillo
Deputy Executive Secretary